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with a Brabantian Obverse

by

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A Patagon Dated 1628 from Chateau-Regnault with a Brabantian Obverse

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Abstract. The article publishes a recent discovery of a patagon of Chateau-Regnault dated 1628 with a reverse copying Albert and Isabella (1598–1621). Although it is anonymous it can be attributed to Louise-Marguerite of Lorraine (1614–29) in whose name a small number of imitative patagons are known. Their chronology reveals a remarkable pattern.



Fig. 1. Chateau-Regnault patagon, 1628 (photo: Theo Nissen)

Obv. Coat-of-arms of the Burgundian archdukes Albert and Isabella (1598–1621), **ARCHI(D.AVST).DVCES.BVRG.BRAB.Z**

Rev. Crowned Burgundian cross with briquet at the centre, ornament below, dividing the date **16 – 28**, **MONE(TA.AR)GEN(TA).CASTRO.REGINALDI.C**
27.93 g; 41 mm.

This recently discovered patagon (Table 1, no. 5 and Fig. 1) names the mint, Chateau-Regnault in the French Ardennes, on the reverse. Its obverse is remarkable: it is an exact copy of the reverse of the patagons of the Burgundian archdukes Albert and Isabella (1598–1621) as dukes of Brabant.²

Visual inspection suggests that the coin is of poor alloy. According to the vendor, the coin probably comes from a hoard found in Eastern Poland in about 2006. Patagons circulated widely in Eastern Europe in the seventeenth century where they were a popular coin in the trade with the Low Countries. The resemblance of the newly found coin to the Brabantian original was apparently close enough for it to circulate freely.

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² H. Vanhoudt, *De munten van de Bourgondische, Spaanse en Oostenrijkse Nederlanden en van de Franse en Hollandse periode 1434–1830* (Heverlee, 2015), pp. 400–01, no. 619.

When compared to the other known patagons of Chateau-Regnault, a remarkable pattern becomes clear. In order to demonstrate this these patagons are discussed first.

The published patagons

The first type discussed here was originally published by Meyer in 1849 (Table 1, no. 1 and Fig. 2):³

Obv. LVDMARG.ALOTH.D.G.SVP.PR.C.REGI

Rev. (tower) MONETA.ARGENTEACAS.TRO.REGINAL.CV

It bears the coat-of-arms of Louise-Marguerite of Lorraine (1614–29) on the obverse, and is undated.



Fig. 2. Undated Chateau-Regnault patagon (Meyer, pl. 13, no. 2)

Another undated and closely related patagon was published by Poey d'Avant in 1862 (Table 1, no. 2 and Fig 3).⁴



Fig. 3. Undated Chateau-Regnault patagon (Poey d'Avant, no. 6258)

Obv. LVDMARG.ALOTH.D.G.SVP.PR.C.REGI

Rev. (angel's head) MONETA.NOVA.ARGENTEA.CAST.REGI.CVSA

The obverse is identical to that of Fig. 1, and it even appears that the same die was used. The Poey d'Avant coin is also so similar to another piece now in Brussels (Table 1, no. 2 and Fig. 4), especially with regard to the degree and pattern of wear that it is most probably the same coin. This is assumed in the remainder of this paper.

³ J.-F.-G. Meyer, 'Monnaies inédites de Château-Renaud et d'Arches', *RBN* 5 (1849), pp. 429–37 at pp. 432–3, pl. XIII, no. 2 = PdA pl. 145, no. 4.

⁴ Poey d'Avant, op. cit., p. 299, no. 6258 and pl. CXLV, no. 5.



Fig. 4. Chateau-Regnault, Louise-Marguerite de Lorraine (1614–29),
patagon (undated), PdA 6258 (Royal Cabinet (Brussels),
collection B. de Jongh inv. 2106; 40 mm; 23.84 g)

The blurred initial mark of the reverse legend shown in the drawing as a cross (the mintmark of Tournai) is clearly an angle's head. The angle's head mark was used by the Brussels mint during the reign of Albert and Isabella (1598–1621).

In 1766, Madai published another patagon which he described as follows (Table 1, no. 3):⁵

Obv. 'A large crowned coat-of-arms, around which a collar of a French order'⁶
with the legend: **LVD MARG. ALOTH. DEI. GR. SVP. PR. C. REGI**

Rev. 'An elegant St Andrew's cross, with a shield with the eagle in its heart, a
crown on top and once again an eagle below, and on both sides: 1626';⁷
legend: **MON. NOVA. ARGENTEA. CAST. REG. CVSA**

Unfortunately, to my knowledge neither Madai nor any other author published an illustration of this coin. Since Madai was the first to publish a patagon from Chateau-Regnault and thus had no published source to draw on, there can be no doubt that this patagon exists or existed. The obverse legend is almost identical to that on the two undated patagons, except that the letter D is replaced by 'DEI'.

The fifth example was first published by Davenport, and is dated 1628 (Table 1, no. 4 and Fig. 5):⁸

⁵ D.S. Madai, *Vollständiges Thaler-Cabinet 2* (Königsberg, 1766), p. 60, no. 2574. Unfortunately the coin was not depicted by later authors either, or in catalogues, K.G. Schultess-Rechberg, *Thaler-Kabinett. Beschreibung aller bekannt gewordenen Thaler der Päpste und Erzbischöfe* (Vienna, 1840), p. 444, no. 1478; J.-F.-G. Meyer, 'Monnaies inédites de Chateau-Renaud et d'Arches', *RBN* 5 (1849), pp. 431–2; F. Poey d'Avant, *Les monnaies féodales francaises*, 3 (Paris, 1862), p. 299; De Mey, op. cit., p. 28, no. D 45; Krause-Mishler, *Standard Catalog of World Coins - 1601–1700*, 6th Edition (Iola, 2014), no. 63.

⁶ 'Ein weitläufiges gecröntes Wapen, umgeben mit einer Ordenskette eines Französischen Ordens'.

⁷ 'Ein zierliches Andreascreuß, auf dessen Mitte ein Schild mit dem Adler, darüber eine Crone schwebet; unten ist wiederum ein Adler, und auf den Seiten: 1626'.

⁸ Davenport, op. cit., p. 253, no. 3829.



Fig. 5. Chateau-Regnault patagon dated 1628 (Davenport, no. 3829)

Obv. LVDMARG.AL(O)TH.D.G.SVP.PR.C.REGI
Rev. (tower) MONETA.ARGENTEA.CASTRO.REGINALDI.C

Unfortunately, the picture in Davenport’s catalogue is not clear and he did not provide the coin’s provenance so that it is not possible to make an exact comparison with the other patagons. The obverse legend, however, appears identical to that on nos 1 and 2 above. The reverse appears the same as that of the newly discovered patagon.

The evolution

Table 1 contains an overview of the patagons described.

Table 1. Overview and concordance of the imitative patagons of Chateau-Regnault

No.	Krause-Mishler (2015)	De Mey (1985)	Davenport (1974) ⁹	Poey d’Avant (1862)	Date on coin
1 (Fig. 2)	53	D 44	3826	6256	undated
2 (Figs 3 and 4)	56	D 43	3827	6258 ¹⁰	undated
3	63	D 45	-	6257	1626
4 (Fig. 5)	64	D 46	3829 ¹¹	-	1628
5 (Fig. 1)	-	-	-	-	1628

The pattern that emerges from Table 1 is that the first four patagons identify Louise-Marguerite of Lorraine (1614–29) and show her coat of arms. The first two were probably struck with the same obverse die, which may also have been used for no. 4. If Madai’s description is correct, no. 3 was produced with another, closely related, die. These four patagons suggest a chronological order, starting with undated patagons and ending with two dated ones, from 1626 and 1628 respectively. Of course, the undated ones may have been produced later than, or simultaneously with, the latter. Yet that seems less likely when no. 5 is taken into account: it seems to have been produced with the same reverse die as no. 4, yet has a Brabantian obverse. The existence of the dates 1626 and 1628 on the signed copies no. 3 and no. 4 respectively show that no. 5 must have been the last in the series. Thus, the last coin

⁹ Davenport no. 3828 is not a patagon.
¹⁰ Poey d’Avant no. 6258 is a variety of no. 6256, not of no. 6257 as he implies. Nos 2 and 2a may be the same piece.
¹¹ Erroneously, De Mey refers to Davenport no. 3820 instead of Davenport no. 3829.

in the series is the most deceptive one as one side is an exact copy of a Brabantian original. One might have expected the coins types to develop from a closer imitation of the original to a more independent type. In this case the opposite occurred.

Discussion

There are various possibilities to explain the combination of a reverse from Chateau-Regnault with a Brabantian obverse on the newly discovered patagon. In the first place, it may be a plain forgery rather than a product of the Chateau-Regnault mint. This appears unlikely: if one makes a forgery, why not make an exact copy of a Brabantian patagon which would presumably be more easily accepted than a hybrid patagon? One answer would be that if arrested, the forger could maintain he had not forged an existing coin, yet one may doubt whether this argument would be sufficient to escape punishment.

It is more likely that the patagon was indeed produced at Chateau-Regnault. The question arises, though, why was this hybrid coin made? This is especially puzzling as it was minted after signed copies identifying their origin on both sides. The mint master may have thought that the well-known Brabantian reverse would increase the likelihood of the coin being accepted. By 1627 several minor denominations of the Chateau-Regnault mint had already been classified as forgeries,¹² so that a more deceptive imitation may have been felt necessary to increase the chance of the coin's acceptance by the public. However, the existence of patagon no. 4 (Fig. 5) dated 1628 does not fit with this explanation as it proves that the production of signed copies with two Chateau-Regnault sides was continued after the mint's products had been classified as forgeries.

Alternatively, a suitable Chateau-Regnault obverse die may not have been available and an old Brabantian die was used instead simply because it was somehow available and would save the cost of cutting a new die. The issue then, of course, is how that die became available. Its presence suggests a link between a Brabantian mint, which was under close supervision of the Burgundian authorities, and the seigneurial mint of Chateau-Regnault. If the Brabantian obverse was an original, it was surely not acquired legally. A minter or mint official may have stolen it, and used it many years later when working at the Chateau-Regnault mint. Further research may find Brabantian patagons minted with the same die as the one used on the newly discovered patagon. Given the large number of patagons produced in Brabant, such a project would be hard to realise.

¹² H. Verdussen, *Carte ou liste, Contenant le prix de chacun Marcq, Once, Estrelin & As, poids de Troyes, de toutes les especes d'or & d'argent deffendues, legieres, ou trop vseés, & moyennant ce declarées pour billon, comme les Maistres des Monnoyes & Chan geurs fermentéz sont tenuz d'en payer pour icelles, selon l'Ordonnance de sa Maiesté, faicte par les Generaux des Monnoyes, au mois de Mars 1627. avecq les figures desdictes especes* (Antwerp, 1627 (reprint Antwerp, 1974)) (unpaginated).

